

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8237

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3030

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJECT: U.S. CONCERN OVER NARCOTICS SITUATION IN THAILAND

REF: (A) STATE 027894, (B) BANGKOK 0933

SUMMARY. AS PART OF THE COURSE OF ACTION SUGGESTED IN PARAGRAPH 5A OF REF B, THE AMBASSADOR HAS INSTRUCTED COUNTRY TEAM MEMBERS TO STRESS OUR GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT THE NARCOTICS SITUATION IN THAILAND IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THAI CONTACTS. THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF ACTION WHICH HAVE BEEN TAKEN. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JANUARY 20 EMBASSY OFFICERS HOSTED A LUNCH FOR THE NARCOTICS COMMITTEE OF THE LIONS CLUB IN BANGKOK. THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ATTENDING INCLUDED DR. SOMSAK BHEKASUTA (CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE), M.L. CHITRASARN XUMSAI (OF KLM AIRLINES), MR. CHAOVALIT SINGCHAROEN (CHAIRMAN OF THE BANGKOK METROPOLIS ASSEMBLY), M.L. SOMSAK KAMBHU (MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE IFCC ADVISERS LIMITED), AND MR. PAIROTE GESMANKIT (OF THE OFFICE OF THE BOARD OF INVESTMENT IN THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER.). DURING THE LUNCHEON MISSION OFFICERS EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT THE DRUG SITUATION IN THAILAND AND DISCUSSED WAYS THAT THE LIONS CLUB COULD HELP CALL ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEM. THE LIONS CLUB, WHICH HAS SPONSORED DRUG EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS IN THE PAST, SOUGHT IDEAS FROM SOME OF THE FOREIGN SPECIALISTS AT THE LUNCH

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FOR A NEW DRUG ABUSE EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGN. REPRESENTA-

TIVES FROM THE BANGKOK OFFICE OF OGILVY AND MATHER ADVERTISING COMPANY OUTLINED THE PROGRAM THEY ARE PUTTING TOGETHER FOR THE THAI GOVERNMENT AND MADE SOME SUGGESTIONS ON HOW THE LIONS CLUB MIGHT HELP. DR. SOMSAK, CHAIRMAN OF THE LIONS CLUB NARCOTICS COMMITTEE, SAID HE WOULD LIKE THE GROUP TO MEET AGAIN AND DISCUSS FURTHER WHAT LIONS CLUB CAN DO TO MAKE THE THAI PUBLIC AWARE OF THE ADDICTION PROBLEM. (COMMENT: MANY OF THE THAI WHO ATTENDED THE LUNCH ARE IN POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE IN THAI SOCIETY AND ARE ANXIOUS TO SPREAD THE WORD ON NARCOTICS. THEY CAN DO MUCH TO INCREASE THE LEVEL OF WARENESS OF THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM.)

2. ON FEBRUARY 2 AN EMBASSY OFFICER SPOKE WITH PHLENGSAK PRAKATPHESAT, A YOUNG SINO-THAI BUSINESSMAN AND ALSO A MEMBER OF THE LIONS CLUB NARCOTICS COMMITTEE. THE EMBASSY OFFICER DISCUSSED THE THAI NARCOTICS PROBLEM AT LENGTH AND NOTED THE U.S. INTEREST IN AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM IN THAILAND. THE EMBASSY OFFICER DESCRIBED THE DRUG PROBLEM AS ONE OF INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE AND ONE THAT THAILAND COULD DO MUCH MORE ABOUT. (COMMENT: PHLENGSAK TRAVELS IN COURT CIRCLES AS WELL AS BUSINESS CIRCLES, AND HE HAS GOOD CONTACTS WITH MANY PROMINENT PEOPLE.)

3. DAO OFFICER SPOKE WITH AIR VICE MARSHAL SOMPON BURURASANAPHAN, DIRECTOR OF INTELLIGENCE, RTAF, EMPHASIZING U.S. CONCERN WITH THE NARCOTICS FLOW THROUGH THAILAND. THE DAO OFFICER MENTIONED THE RELATIVELY POOR SHOWING OF THAILAND IN STEMMING THE FLOW AND THE EXAMPLE OF BURMA, WHICH HAS RECENTLY SHOWN AN ENERGETIC ATTITUDE ON THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM. HE REFERRED TO AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE'S RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND SPOKE OF THE MOOD OF AMERICA REGARDING THIS PROBLEM AS WELL AS THE FAILURE OF THE SOURCE NATIONS TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION. THE DAO OFFICER REQUESTED THAT HIS REMARKS BE CONVEYED TO ACM KAMON THECHASUNGKHLA, COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF RTAF, WITH A REQUEST THAT HE DO WHAT HE COULD TO PRECIPITATE MEANINGFUL ACTION. SOMPON PROMISED TO DO

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SO. (COMMENT: THE DAO OFFICER PLANS TO TAKE THE MATTER UP DIRECTLY WITH KAMON AND OTHER THAI OFFICERS.)

4. ON THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 9 SEVERAL EMBASSY AND USOM OFFICERS DISCUSSED NARCOTICS PROBLEMS WITH THE GOVERNOR, KHUN WHICHIT, AND DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF NONTHABURI PROVINCE. WHICHIT SAID THAT THERE WAS A GROWING PROBLEM OF HEROIN ADDICTION AMONG FACTORY WORKERS IN NONTHABURI

AND AT THE TWO VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS. EMBASSY OFFICERS NOTED U.S. CONCERN THAT RTG EFFORTS TO INTERDICT THE FLOW OF HEROIN THROUGH THAILAND TO THE U.S. HAD BEEN VERY MODEST INDEED, AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THAILAND'S PERFORMANCE IN THE FUTURE IN THIS RESPECT WOULD IMPROVE. (COMMAND: DESPITE THIS EFFORT, EMBASSY OFFICERS HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT GOVERNOR WHICHIT DID NOT THINK THAT THIS WAS YET A VERY SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR THAILAND.)

5. MACTHAI HAS SUBMITTED A LIST OF SOME 38 THAI ARMY, AIR FORCE AND NAVY OFFICERS WITH WHOM U.S. MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE TALKED ABOUT THE NARCOTICS PROBLEM. WHITEHOUSE

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